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President: Mr. Kerim ..... (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda items 10 and 110

Report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/62/137)

Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/62/138)

The President: The 2005 United Nations World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1) called on the General Assembly and the Security Council to create new institutional mechanisms for strengthening the capacity of the United Nations to support countries emerging from conflict. As a result, the Peacebuilding Commission, the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund were established. Those innovative achievements represent the most significant outcomes of the Summit to date. Therefore, it gives me great pleasure to open the first joint debate to review the annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/62/137) and the report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/62/138).

Over the past two decades, the United Nations has been at the centre of expanding peacebuilding activities in all parts of the world, including my own region, South-Eastern Europe. The United Nations has a unique comparative advantage in addressing the huge challenges faced by countries emerging from conflict. The demand for our peacebuilding operations and capacities is obviously set for growth.

The evidence shows that half of the countries emerging from conflict will relapse into violence within five years. To break that vicious circle, it is critical that the international community provide sustained practical support and resources to assist national efforts.

There is feedback between peace and stability, on the one hand, and economic development, human rights and the rule of law, on the other. The Peacebuilding Commission has a critical role to play in balancing both sides of that equation and in accelerating post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery. In addition to that substantive operational role, the Commission coordinates international efforts, marshals donor resources and focuses the attention of global opinion on peacebuilding issues. We all have a duty to ensure that the Peacebuilding Commission works well and that the decision to create it is translated into practical action aimed at promoting the well-being of millions of people trapped in post-conflict situations.

I believe that the Commission has now firmly established itself; it has made a good start. However, that is just the beginning of a longer process. Given the organizational complexity of the Commission, it is crucial that its coordination with all other United Nations organs and with other parts of the system be maintained in a balanced and proportionate manner. We also need to ensure that duplication is avoided.

The success of the Commission will clearly depend on cooperation from all of us to support its work — in particular, our full commitment to resolving the few remaining procedural hurdles, so that it can be fully effective. In that context, it is important to

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recognize that it has been operational for a little more than a year.

However, even during that short time, the Commission has brought a more coherent system-wide approach to peacebuilding and has strengthened the impact of the international community. We should learn from that example and apply what we have learned to the context of other areas in which we seek to improve the effectiveness of United Nations activities. I am confident that the Assembly will seize this opportunity to review and assess the work undertaken thus far by the Peacebuilding Commission and to provide it with a strategic vision of the way forward.

The two reports before us include thought-provoking recommendations and conclusions that the Assembly may wish to address. In particular, the Assembly may wish to reflect on the progress achieved by the Commission and the Fund in the two countries under their consideration, thus demonstrating our continued commitment to the peoples of both countries. In that regard, I look forward to the remarks to be made by the delegations of Burundi and Sierra Leone. Their views and experiences related to working with the Commission on the ground will be invaluable.

Looking ahead, the Commission should continue to refine its strategies in the countries under consideration, develop its advocacy role among all stakeholders engaged in peacebuilding activities and become more effective at marshalling resources. The Commission will also need to identify ways to improve coherence and synergies in its numerous activities in order to contribute to better peacebuilding policy and practice.

The main challenge now facing the Commission is to maximize its impact on the ground. In order to be as effective as possible, the United Nations peacebuilding architecture must be based on the principle of national ownership.

It is also critical that the $250 million funding target of the Peacebuilding Fund be met. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Her Excellency Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, President of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session, for her efforts to raise additional resources — with the support of the former Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission, Ambassador Gaspar Martins, Permanent Representative of Angola — and for her unique personal contribution to the Fund.

Going forward, I am sure that the membership will lend its full support and cooperation to the new Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission, Ambassador Takasu, Permanent Representative of Japan, in his efforts to strengthen the Commission and to fund the remaining $20 million shortfall in the Peacebuilding Fund.

I hope that our debate today will send a strong signal that we will reach out to meet the needs and aspirations of all peoples who have suffered the horrors of war. For the people in countries emerging from conflict, this Organization represents the best and only hope of attaining a more dignified life.

Therefore, the only relevant standard against which we can judge the success of the new peacebuilding architecture is by the practical results it achieves on the ground.

I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Japan, who is also the Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Mr. Takasu (Japan): First of all, on behalf of the members of the Peacebuilding Commission, allow me to express our heartfelt gratitude to you, Mr. President, for providing a timely opportunity to discuss the annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission.

In September 2005, our leaders adopted the 2005 World Summit Outcome, which explicitly emphasized the need for a "coordinated, coherent and integrated approach to post-conflict peacebuilding and reconciliation with a view to achieving sustainable peace" (A/res/60/1, para. 97). The document further states that the Commission was established "to bring together all relevant actors to marshal resources and to advise on and propose integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery" (*ibid, para. 98*).

With that in mind, let me briefly look back on the first year of the work of the Commission. The first annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission, as contained in document A/62/137, provides a detailed account of the work and activities of the Commission during the first year of its operation. The process of compiling the report reflected the seriousness with which the Commission's membership has undertaken its work and the significance it attaches to its anticipated contribution to peace consolidation and the

promotion of national ownership of peacebuilding measures in post-conflict situations. Here I would like to pay special tribute to Ambassador Martins of Angola for his dedication and leadership in steering the initial stage of the Commission.

In the course of approximately 50 formal and informal meetings and briefings held in various configurations, the Peacebuilding Commission addressed critical organizational, methodological and thematic issues, as well as country-specific issues relating to Burundi and Sierra Leone, coordinating various contributions to sustainable peace and opening avenues for mutual commitments between the international community and the countries under consideration. I believe that, in its first year, the Peacebuilding Commission contributed significantly to the promotion of integrated post-conflict peacebuilding strategies in Burundi and Sierra Leone.

In addition, the Peacebuilding Commission sought to accumulate best practices and lessons on critical peacebuilding issues. By establishing the Working Group on Lessons Learned, the Commission was able to benefit from existing experience in peace consolidation in many parts of the world.

As clearly underlined in its first annual report, the Peacebuilding Commission faced tremendous challenges during its initial phase involving establishing its organizational structures, defining its working methods and finding ways to fulfil its core mandates. Some of these challenges are likely to be the subject of additional discussion during the second session. The "Conclusions" part of the report contains serious reflection on key outstanding issues and challenges before the Commission, including the question of financing its field missions.

The United Nations peacebuilding architecture is now in place and the Peacebuilding Commission is entering its second year of activity. The Peacebuilding Commission's activities need to be carried out in a coherent manner. We believe that it may be appropriate for the Commission to begin addressing the addition of new countries for its consideration, in close consultation with the referring bodies.

Strengthening the Commission's relationship with relevant bodies and actors, such as the United Nations' principal organs, namely, the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the Secretariat, funds and programmes, regional and subregional organizations, international financial institutions and civil society, is essential. As part of such efforts, I, as this year's Chairman of the Commission, will devote constant efforts and avail myself of every opportunity to establish closer working relationships with those organizations.

Exploring thematic issues relevant to peacebuilding is also a matter of great importance. I am particularly convinced that discussing broad policy guidelines on peacebuilding activities in general, without focusing on a specific country, is also worth pursuing.

Raising awareness of the Commission's work, not only among relevant actors but also among the public at large, would greatly enhance the understanding of and necessary attention to the work of the Commission and the countries under its consideration. In this regard, we intend to make every effort to heighten the visibility of the Commission's work. At the same time, we would hope that individual Member States will join our efforts to promote the work of the Commission.

As Chairman of the Commission, I would like to assure all Members of our full dedication and commitment to the real success of the Commission, that is to say, making change in the field. In that spirit, we request all of you to lend your valuable and much needed support to our work at the Commission.

I would like to add just a few words in my capacity as Permanent Representative of Japan. Japan has provided very active support for the Peacebuilding Commission and the Fund. It coordinates its activities with those of the Commission. Recently, we sent high-level missions to Burundi and Sierra Leone, headed by then Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hamada, for the purpose of enhancing the peacebuilding process in those two countries, and a report on his visit to Sierra Leone was compiled for the Commission's forthcoming discussion. Japan shares the views of the Commission in its annual report with regard to the critical priority areas, and we have accordingly provided those countries with development assistance in fields such as basic infrastructure. Our activities have included the rehabilitation of power plants in Sierra Leone and community development in Burundi.

Japan accords high priorities to post-conflict peacebuilding efforts. Last month, the Japanese Government contributed to these efforts by launching a

new programme for training civilian peacebuilding professionals from Japan and also other Asian countries. The training takes place in Hiroshima and many other places in the world.

Japan will redouble its efforts to achieve the Commission's goal of building and consolidating sustainable peace by hosting the fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development and the G-8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit.

Mr. Salgueiro (Portugal): I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the European Union and the candidate countries of Turkey, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, as well as Ukraine, Georgia and Armenia, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, for organizing this important debate. The Peacebuilding Commission is a key achievement of the United Nations reform process. Created to address a gap in the United Nations system to support countries emerging from conflict, this new advisory body, together with the establishment of the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund, has provided an innovative institutional framework within which the Governments concerned, the international community and civil society have begun to address some key peacebuilding issues.

This was made possible thanks to the commitment of the previous Chairpersons of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission, Ambassador Ismael Gaspar Martins and Ambassador Kenzo Oshima, the two Vice-Chairpersons and the two Chairpersons of the country-specific configurations. The European Union would like to congratulate them for their valuable work and for the progress achieved under their leadership.

We would also like to congratulate Ambassador Yukio Takasu for his recent election as Chairperson of the Peacebuilding Commission and wish him all the success for his mandate. The European Union looks forward to the Commission having a real impact on the ground, including by bringing about greater coherence in international efforts to build peace.

The reports of both the Peacebuilding Commission (A/62/137) and the Peacebuilding Fund (A/62/138) submitted to the General Assembly stress that consolidation of peace must be based on national ownership and international partnership. The European Union agrees that efforts to consolidate peace and development must be based on the needs and perspectives of the affected countries themselves. Experience shows that a nationally owned and led process is the veritable key to success of peacebuilding and ultimately of sustainable peace. Experience equally shows that an inclusive and participatory peacebuilding process is the only way to ensure nationwide shared priority-setting and nation-building, a truthful correspondence between real needs and external assistance, and a sustained conformity between commitments and implementation.

In this sense, it is crucial to engage all stakeholders, including national civil society, the private sector, Governments, non-governmental organizations and current and potential donors. Close coordination between United Nations Headquarters and the national actors is essential in order to identify the most pressing priorities, such as good governance, youth empowerment, job creation, the promotion and protection of human rights, gender, rule of law and justice or security sector reform.

In order to ensure that peacebuilding efforts are sustainable, they should be monitored and tracked with quantitative and qualitative indicators at the strategic level to assess progress towards agreed goals, to take appropriate action when threats to peace arise, to enhance coherence of multidimensional efforts and to track fulfilment of mutual commitments by national and international actors. In this context, the Working Group on Lessons Learned should help the Peacebuilding Commission apply best practices to its work at the field level. Additionally, in order to maximize the Commission's positive impact on the ground, we believe that the link between Headquarters and the field should be strengthened. Where possible, representatives from the field should participate in the Commission's discussions in New York via video conference or in person, not just to brief the Commission, but also to engage in the assessment of progress and the detailing of next steps to be taken. In addition to existing coordination meetings, Commission meetings could also be held in-country so that more actors can be involved.

Another priority that would enable the Commission to consolidate its added value and maximize its impact would be to increase its visibility in the field through improved outreach and communication strategies as well as greater publicity. Also, we are of the opinion that the Peacebuilding Support Office needs to be equipped with the adequate resources necessary to continue to efficiently support the Commission's growing work.

The European Union welcomes the engagement that the Peacebuilding Commission has shown in Sierra Leone and Burundi in the past year. We commend the intensive work of all stakeholders that have contributed to the Strategic Framework for peacebuilding in Burundi and consider it a critical instrument providing guidance for the Government of Burundi, the Commission itself, and all partners for their common work in peacebuilding. We underline the importance of the monitoring and tracking mechanism that is currently being developed between Burundi and the Commission to allow for reviewing progress in peacebuilding activities and objectives on a regular basis. Without this mechanism, the Strategic Framework will not have much impact on the ground.

With regard to Sierra Leone, the European Union considers that the Peacebuilding Commission has made a valuable contribution to enhancing international attention and financial support and in aiding the overall peace consolidation process. The European Union stands ready to continue to assist in the finalization of the Sierra Leone Compact and in developing tools to track progress. The Commission should ensure that the peacebuilding process remains on track and that gaps are addressed in a timely and coherent manner. The European Union believes that the Compact should build on existing frameworks, such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, the Peace Consolidation Strategy and the frameworks of assistance of other main donors. We have to ensure the optimal articulation of these frameworks while highlighting national and international commitments and encouraging their implementation.

The fact that the monitoring and tracking mechanism of the Strategic Framework for peacebuilding in Burundi will be based to the extent possible on the monitoring mechanism and timelines of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper is an encouraging development in the right direction. In this context, the European Community, as a main multilateral donor in both Burundi and Sierra Leone, stands ready to work constructively towards this end at the strategic and field level.

The European Union recognizes the importance of sustained and predictable financing for peacebuilding. The Peacebuilding Fund, in operation since January 2007, plays a critical role in providing countries with start-up funding for early recovery. The European Union member States have been contributing to this Fund, and the Union is collectively its largest donor. It is important to ensure that additional countries are declared eligible for support from the Peacebuilding Fund and that mobilization of resources is enhanced in order to achieve the $250 million funding target and to effectively address the transition gap.

The European Union sees the Peacebuilding Fund as a catalyst for work on peacebuilding efforts, but long-term funding must still come from multilateral and bilateral donors. The scope of the Fund should not overlap with other existing instruments. In order to ensure broad and effective use of the Fund, all of its three funding windows should be fully utilized. The role of the Peacebuilding Fund Advisory Group can be particularly helpful in providing guidance on the effective use of the funds.

As recognized in both reports, it is crucial that the distinction between the Peacebuilding Fund and the Peacebuilding Commission is clarified for all the parties involved in peacebuilding from the outset of the process. We should further reflect on the interrelationship between the Commission and the Fund, in particular what the sequencing is between them and how to link short-term early interventions with a long-term strategy.

The European Union's assessment of the first year of the Peacebuilding Commission is positive. At the same time, we are aware of the major challenges that still lie ahead. The Commission must prove its ability to deliver real benefits to the countries under its consideration. Effective working practices for the Commission's relationship with other United Nations bodies also need to be established. The Commission's relationship with the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Bretton Woods institutions should be enhanced, and those organs, in particular the Security Council, should

take better advantage of the Peacebuilding Commission's advisory role.

The Peacebuilding Commission can consider new countries in its second year. At least one country has already expressed its wish to be included in the Commission's agenda. The Commission should ensure that it has the capabilities to address those countries, in terms of human resources and capacity, and that it has learned the lessons from its experiences with Burundi and Sierra Leone. The Peacebuilding Commission should also continue its reflections on the appropriate time for scaling down and ending the Commission's engagement with a country.

To conclude, the European Union will maintain its positive contribution to the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. We are determined to help the Commission make a positive and measurable impact in the regions where it is engaged. In this context, we stress the importance of the standing invitation extended to the European Community as an institutional donor to participate in the meetings of the Peacebuilding Commission. We look forward to the arrangement finally implemented, allowing for adequate representation of the European Union, given the major contributions that the Union, as an international actor, makes in a number of post-conflict countries and regions worldwide, particularly in the areas of diplomacy, military and security.

Mrs. Angella Brown (Jamaica): Please allow me, Sir, on behalf of the caucus of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in the Peacebuilding Commission, to extend sincere congratulations to you on your election to the presidency of this body. We are confident that under your able leadership the General Assembly will complete its slate of activities in a cordial, efficient and professional manner commensurate with the high office of the presidency and the expectations of the many delegations which make up this Organization.

The report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/62/137) to the Assembly, as mandated by the founding resolutions — General Assembly resolution 60/180 and Security Council resolution 1646 (2005) — is a strong signal that the latest initiatives in the United Nations reform process are under way, in earnest. The completion of its first year in operation and the presentation of this report to the Assembly not only is a defining moment in the existence of the Commission, but will also form a solid basis for work to move forward and add another facet to the already existing body of knowledge, aiding in the consolidation of peace and laying the foundation for the immediate rehabilitation and sustained economic recovery and development of the post-conflict countries under consideration.

Throughout the preceding 12 months, the Peacebuilding Commission successfully grappled with several administrative, organizational and directional issues as it sought to establish itself and fulfil its mandate, catering for the peacebuilding needs of Burundi and Sierra Leone, the first two countries under its consideration.

The Non-Aligned Movement caucus in the Peacebuilding Commission is particularly pleased with the comprehensive character of the content of the report, which in our estimation represents a factual and faithful account of what transpired over the period and in so doing, provides an accurate record of the Commission's work for posterity.

The Non-Aligned Movement continues to emphasize that the development aspects of any strategy geared towards extricating countries emerging from conflict cannot be over emphasized. The Movement strongly agrees that the Peacebuilding Commission cannot ignore fundamental principles such as the rule of law, security sector reform and human rights. But certainly those principles cannot be emphasized at the expense of providing immediate post-conflict risk-reduction strategies, which is the precise and direct purpose of the Commission. Such strategies are geared towards poverty reduction and include education and training, rural agricultural development, private sector reform and other capacity-building initiatives, including the creation of an investor-friendly climate — all of which lead towards job creation, together with enhanced employment opportunities and, by extension, overall improvement in the lives and living conditions of local populations.

The Non-Aligned Movement looks forward to the continuation of the dialogue within the Peacebuilding Commission as we continue to build on the successes of the past months, always mindful that the countries under consideration by the Commission require swift action to implement priority projects as part of the rehabilitation and reconstruction process.

Additionally, the Peacebuilding Commission must continue to identify the means by which funds that are approved for disbursement by the Peacebuilding Fund reach the recipient countries in the shortest possible time. It is not sufficient to identify the urgency of the need while paying scant regard to or becoming lax in the critical follow-up actions at the most crucial stage of the process.

The second year of the Peacebuilding Commission will demand close coordination between the Commission, other United Nations bodies, the Peacebuilding Fund and donor countries and agencies, particularly those on the ground in post-conflict situations, if some of the pitfalls of the recent months are to be avoided. It is also important that the Commission continue its work in the next months with the same level of commitment, dedication and drive that was evident during the period under review. In that connection, the Non-Aligned Movement would like to reiterate several key principles which should continue to guide the Commission's work.

While we welcome the commitment of the donor community in the activities of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Commission is not a donor organization. Its activities involving all stakeholders must be executed in a far broader, more comprehensive and participatory context consistent with its mandate. Decisions regarding the provision of financial resources should, therefore, be guided by national priorities and be based on the collective decision of members of the Peacebuilding Commission. Recommendations for assistance must highlight the priority areas established by the Government of the country under review by the Commission. The matter of Government guidance should also be uppermost in planning the way forward and will certainly serve to strengthen the process of national ownership. This holistic and inclusive approach to evaluation and recommendations adopted at country-specific meetings can only add to the integrity of the process within the Commission.

We believe that, with the architecture of the Commission now completed, its work should take on another dimension as it responds to the expectations of the international community, particularly those of countries emerging from conflict, by producing tangible results with greater and more robust activities in the coming months, including the addition of more countries for consideration as they try to consolidate peace and engineer prosperity.

The Non-Aligned Movement caucus in the Peacebuilding Commission calls for the streamlining of the meetings of the Commission. We must move to dispel the misconception that, because of its different configurations, there is more that one Commission. In this regard, the Organizational Committee must be the focal point of all Commission activities, including the work of the country-specific meetings.

Finally, the NAM continues to pay tribute to Angola, the first Chair of the Commission, under whose guidance the achievements of the Commission during the initial stage were accomplished.

Please allow me to also express appreciation to the respective chairs of the country-specific meetings and the Peacebuilding Support Office for their tireless efforts and excellent contributions during the first session of the Commission.

We also take this opportunity to welcome and extend best wishes to Japan, the new Chair of the Commission, and other incoming members of the new Bureau of the Commission.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): The decision to establish the Peacebuilding Commission taken by the 2005 World Summit was a belated but important recognition of the need for a comprehensive approach to peace and the inextricable relationship between peace and development.

As a founding member of the Commission, Pakistan has had the privilege of contributing to its work in its formative phase. We are deeply committed to the Commission's success. I would like to thank Ambassador Martins of Angola for skilfully guiding the work of the Commission during its first year. We are also thankful to Ambassador Løvald of Norway and Ambassador Frank Majoor of the Netherlands for coordinating the Commission's work in the country-specific formats on Burundi and Sierra Leone, as well as to Ambassador Gallardo of El Salvador for his useful work as chair of the Working Group on Lessons Learned. We also assure our full support to the new Chair of the Commission, Ambassador Yukio Takasu of Japan, who has already displayed his energy in promoting the work of the Commission. Let me finally thank the Peacebuilding Support Office for their important contribution to the work of the Commission.

During the first year, the main focus of the Commission was on peacebuilding in the two countries on its agenda, that is, Burundi and Sierra Leone. Substantive work has been done on the two situations, including the elaboration of integrated strategies, which are to form the framework for the Commission's engagement with the two countries. The process was informed and driven by national ownership and by consultations and initiatives at the field level. The Commission undertook field visits to the two countries. The contribution of the United Nations integrated offices in Burundi and Sierra Leone was also crucial in this process.

Apart from describing the Commission's work, the report of the Commission offers observations and recommendations on outstanding issues and challenges. Since this is formative phase of the Commission, it may be too early to start measuring its real impact or evaluating its work in terms of success or failure. Its performance, during the first year, considering the inherent difficulties and the differences of opinion and expectations that characterized the evolutionary discussions of the Commission, is by all means commendable. We believe that despite "teething problems", good groundwork has been done with regard to the organizational and substantive agenda. Building on this, we hope that the Commission will be able to improve its output in both quality and quantity in the coming years.

The Commission also faces several challenges: political, conceptual, organizational and functional. From the outset, there has been an effort on the part of some to keep the Commission closely tied to and, indeed, subservient to the Security Council. The resulting friction could have been avoided if the Commission's relationship with the three principal organs had been more clearly defined in the founding resolutions. We hope that the Commission's work will evolve with much greater appreciation for the value of collaborative and complementary efforts by the three principal organs. Indeed, it was this need for such a complementary arrangement that served as the rational for the creation of the Commission.

Another problem has been the effort to reduce the role of the Organizational Committee. We agree that most of the work should take place in the country-specific formats. Indeed, this was the concept promoted in Pakistan's 2004 proposal for the creation of ad-hoc composite committees. However, once we all agreed to establish the Organizational Committee, this Committee should be accorded its due place and be fully utilized. It should have a strategic oversight of the work of the Commission, including country-specific meetings and the Working Group on Lessons Learned. The Committee should meet more frequently. The Committee and its chair should be the primary interface of the Commission with all external actors, particularly the principal organs, institutional donors and others. The country-specific formats, designed to generate maximum efficiency and flexibility, should not appear to bypass the Organizational Committee.

Neither should the Commission turn into another forum for donors and recipients. One casualty of such a development would be national ownership on the part of the countries under consideration, and a much bigger casualty could be the Commission itself.

Demands for onerous commitments on the part of the countries on the agenda, introduction of conditions and multiple scrutiny will shift the Commission from its main task of assisting these countries which are, after all, faced with special circumstances. We have seen, for instance, in the discussion on the strategic framework for Burundi, that, while commitments were expected from the country concerned, there was reluctance, on the part of the partners, to agree to concrete commitments themselves.

On the operational side, the main objective should be to maximize the Commission's impact on the ground. Increased system-wide approach and coordination is the key to assisting the transition from conflict to sustainable peace and development. We must not forget that these are complex crises. They must be addressed comprehensively, in all their aspects — political, security, economic, social and humanitarian. It is also necessary to address the root causes in order to effectively prevent relapse into conflict.

The line between peacebuilding and development is not always clear. Still, there is a need to strike a balance between immediate peacebuilding activities and longer-term development priorities. Trade, investment, official development assistance, debt relief and development of the private sector have to be part of the peacebuilding programme.

Sustainable peace and development cannot be ensured without moving a country towards self-sufficiency and reducing its reliance on external

assistance. The best utilization of the country's own resources should be promoted, inter alia, through trade and value addition of raw materials.

The Peacebuilding Commission held around 50 meetings in different formats during the first year. This kind of attention given to the two countries on its agenda would not have been possible in the Security Council, which can only address issues periodically. It is for this reason that we had earlier proposed that the comprehensive reports of the two Integrated Offices in Burundi and Sierra Leone should be considered in the Commission as well. This would improve coordination between the field and headquarters.

There is a need also to make the most effective use of the Peacebuilding Commission's advice and recommendations. The Commission is a unique mechanism in the sense that all actors are around the table. This should translate into better communication and swift action by all concerned. It is important to see also how the advice of the Commission is influencing the work and decisions of relevant actors. The advice of the Commission can be accorded more weight and greater sanction if it is subsequently incorporated and reflected in the decisions of the principal organs.

The international financial institutions, for their part, should demonstrate greater operational flexibility in their interactions with and assistance to the countries under consideration.

The advocacy role of the Peacebuilding Commission needs to be further strengthened to marshal resources, help ensure predictable financing and ensure the continued attention of the international community on the country concerned. The assistance can be made readily available through the Peacebuilding Fund, which is invaluable. However, such assistance is intended to be of immediate or short-term nature. It is therefore important to enhance the catalytic impact of the interventions of the Fund, including assistance provided through its emergency window. But it should be recognized that much larger resources are required and on a sustained basis to carry out the agreed objectives, plans and programmes related to peacebuilding in the countries concerned. The Commission is best placed to help mobilize these resources through other established mechanisms including donor conferences. The principal organs of the United Nations can all help in this resource-generation effort.

Coordination and exchange of information, including lessons learned, between the Fund and the Peacebuilding Commission are vital for a proper perspective and success of the peacebuilding architecture. It may be a good idea to arrange close interaction between the members of the Commission and the Fund's Advisory Group.

In the final analysis, the key to success lies in implementation and follow-up. Peacebuilding strategic frameworks are the common platform for our work. They will need to be complemented by agreed monitoring and tracking mechanisms with regard to the commitments of both the countries concerned and the international community. We will thus have live strategies, which will allow fine-tuning and course correction, responding to critical gaps and requirements as they arise.

The mapping of completed, current and planned activities and the overall resource flows remains an important ongoing exercise. Typical challenges of external resource mobilization have been identified in the mapping exercises carried out by the Peacebuilding Support Office. This should help identify gaps and potential partners and mechanisms to address them.

In conclusion, I would like to say that the Peacebuilding Commission has shown great promise. Its efforts during the first year have been generally appreciated, including by the two countries on its agenda. This should encourage other countries to seek the advice and assistance of the Commission. Pakistan believes that the Peacebuilding Commission is capable of addressing complex crises in several additional countries. The international community has the resources and the capacity to address the challenges that are being confronted by so many countries caught in the vortex of the problems and politics of scarcity. Ultimately, it is poverty and scarcity which must be conquered comprehensively in the Peacebuilding Commission and in the other relevant organs and bodies at the disposal of the international community.

Mr. Abdelaziz (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is my pleasure to commence my statement by thanking the Peacebuilding Commission and the Secretary-General for the presentation of the first annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its first session (A/62/137) and the report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/62/138).

Convinced of the important role to be played by the Peacebuilding Commission in preventing countries from relapsing into conflict after a post-conflict stage, Egypt sought to become a member of the Commission from its establishment and to have it implement its tasks in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/180 in a manner that would achieve the best possible results.

The first annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/62/137) outlines the achievements of the Commission during its first year, in addition to all related substantive and procedural aspects. Accordingly, the General Assembly should assess the pros and cons and make recommendations designed to enhance the roles of the Organizational Committee, the country-specific configurations of Sierra Leone and Burundi and the Working Group on Lessons Learned to enable them to carry out their mandates in the optimum manner.

It is necessary to ensure that the Commission continues to work actively on bringing together all relevant actors and that it provides recommendations and suggestions based on in-depth studies in order to adopt and implement integrated peacebuilding strategies and to consolidate foundations for sustainable development in the countries emerging from conflict. This requires the Commission to strengthen its relations with various relevant organs, departments and programmes of the United Nations as well as with the international financial institutions, donor countries and regional and subregional organizations concerned with peacebuilding, particularly those existing in the same regions as the countries that are under the Commission's consideration.

Consequently, it is imperative for the Commission to develop its tools of engagement with the countries on its agenda. In this regard, I wish to emphasize the usefulness of field missions, which, by facilitating direct dialogue with Governments, Parliaments, civil society and the private sector, make it possible to obtain first-hand information and directly assess peacebuilding priorities.

Experience has demonstrated the importance of the continued promotion by the Commission of its institutional relationships with the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. These relationships still need further delineation and clarification, in a spirit of full respect for the institutional balance between these organs in accordance with their Charter responsibilities. Furthermore, the provisional rules of procedure of the Peacebuilding Commission need to be continually revisited in the light of developments and experience gained from the work of the Commission during its first year, with a view to the formulation of clear institutional rules and unified criteria that have not been influenced by political considerations and the reflection of all the cases under consideration.

The Commission should not only focus its work on the country-specific meetings, but it should also enhance the institutional role of the Organizational Committee with the aim of promoting debate on specific subjects and the refinement of regulations and procedures related to the rules and working methods of the Peacebuilding Commission, taking into account the findings of the Working Group on Lessons Learned.

In order that our efforts may succeed, the Commission should ensure, while pursuing its work, full respect for and adherence to its main principles, particularly the principle of national ownership of the countries under consideration by the Commission. This principle should be applied to the planning, implementation and termination of the work of the Peacebuilding Commission in the country concerned, based on a sovereign national decision by the country concerned without any political or financial pressure. Moreover, monitoring and follow-up mechanisms should be established to ensure that national and international stakeholders abide by their commitments related to peacebuilding priorities agreed between the Commission and the countries concerned.

The Peacebuilding Commission should not act as a "trusteeship commission" passing judgement on the capabilities of countries emerging from conflict, nor as a mediator seeking to gather donor and recipient countries together, nor as a club for donors, which might lead to the marginalization of the role of non-donor countries members of the Commission. Accordingly, the Commission should undertake an in-depth study of the role of the steering committees that review and adopt projects to be incorporated in the priority plans of each of the countries concerned. The Commission should also specify the unified criteria that these committees should adhere to while reviewing the projects to be submitted to the Peacebuilding Commission for adoption, so as not to give the donors

the chance to impose any conditionalities for agreeing on these projects, which would constrain the sovereignty of the country concerned and the independence of its national decisions.

The General Assembly should also fully support the secretariat of the Peacebuilding Commission and provide it with the necessary posts and financial resources to fulfil its role fully, as well as the financial resources needed for increasing the number of field missions to the countries under consideration by the Commission.

In the light of Egypt's persistent support for the Peacebuilding Fund and its goals, we think that countries should fulfil their pledges to the budget of the Fund, especially since the Fund has received only $142 million out of the $226 million pledged by 34 countries. It is estimated that the budget of the Fund should be $250 million. Delays or non-fulfilment of the pledges will hinder the Fund from performing its functions.

In this regard, it is essential to explain the relation between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund. Despite the fact that the Fund is independent and works under the authority of the Secretary-General, its name — Peacebuilding Fund — shows that more coordination and coherence is needed between its activities and the activities of the Peacebuilding Commission, especially since several countries consider that the Fund has become a forum connecting the Secretary-General with the donor countries, separate from the Peacebuilding Commission. This also requires that the management of the Fund develop in a way that increases its capacity to accomplish its work quickly and effectively and to disburse the funds allocated to specific projects. In this context, the Commission should insist on issuing guidance on the general policies of the Fund pursuant to the terms of reference.

In this connection, we call upon the Secretary-General to increase consultation with the Peacebuilding Commission in cases where he determines that a country is eligible for Peacebuilding Fund support. It is not enough to notify the Commission after issuing his decision to disburse resources from the Fund for one country or another. We are looking forward to the creation by the Fund of a mechanism to assess the usefulness of the resources disbursed and for reporting on whether those resources lead to minimizing the possibility of the countries concerned relapsing into conflict.

In conclusion, I wish to extend my congratulations to the Chairperson of the Peacebuilding Commission, Mr. Ismael Gaspar Martins, the Permanent Representative of Angola, for the reporting period. By the same token, we wish to extend our congratulations to the Ambassadors of the Netherlands, El Salvador and Norway for the success of their efforts in guiding the work of the Commission. We wish also to congratulate the Peacebuilding Fund on the considerable efforts made last year, as explicitly reflected in the report. We wish to reiterate our trust that the coming period will witness extensive cooperation between the Peacebuilding Support Office and the members of the Commission with a view to overcoming the problems that faced the Commission in its first year. We wish Japan and the new Peacebuilding Commission members every success in leading the deliberations of the Commission next year.

Ms. Jahan (Bangladesh): The Bangladesh delegation welcomes this opportunity to deliberate on the work of the Peacebuilding Commission during its first year of operation.

We associate ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement caucus. However, we would like to highlight the following points.

The Peacebuilding Commission, as we are all aware, was established to address a lacuna in the United Nations structure and thus reduce post-conflict countries' risk of relapsing into the quagmire of conflict and crisis. With this end in view, the work done so far by the Peacebuilding Commission in its maiden two ventures in Sierra Leone and Burundi has made significant and tangible contributions towards the consolidation of peace in these two countries.

Despite being in a nascent stage, the first year of operation of the Peacebuilding Commission has been quite satisfactory, given the complexity of its work, the heavy mandate and the fact that it has had to chart its own way of functioning and address some critical organizational, procedural and methodological issues, in addition to its substantive work of peacebuilding. The formulation of country-specific integrated peacebuilding strategies appears to be the right approach and these strategies, given their configuration, have all the potential to become an

effective tool for peacebuilding. The Peacebuilding Support Office, the Peacebuilding Fund and the chairs of the country-specific meetings also deserve their share of credit. We commend the countries of Sierra Leone and Burundi for their cooperation and for taking national ownership of the Peacebuilding Commission initiatives.

There can be no sense of complacency, however. There still remains much scope for improvement. We are of the view that operational relations of the Peacebuilding Commission with the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, other intergovernmental United Nations bodies, relevant international, regional and subregional organizations, national stakeholders, financiers and civil society should be further strengthened. Similarly, operational relations with the recently restructured United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations should also be enhanced. The wrangling with which the Peacebuilding Commission was faced in developing its rules of procedure and working methods during its early stage of operation should be avoided by further streamlining. The Organizational Committee should infuse more dynamism into the peacebuilding architecture by playing a more pro-active and lead role.

The Peacebuilding Commission should have a built-in system for stocktaking, so as to continuously build upon its own achievements of peacebuilding. The Commission should also develop a tracking and monitoring mechanism to feed the tracking functions of the integrated peacebuilding strategies in order to assess their accountability and effectiveness. This would enable the Commission to make necessary adjustments in its efforts to have the maximum impact on the ground. The integrated peacebuilding strategies should be comprehensive enough to cover all the peacebuilding priorities.

As the Working Group on Lessons Learned plans to consider a number of other peacebuilding issues, it should devote some time to sharing the valuable peacekeeping experiences of the troop-contributing countries. The lessons learned in that regard should be duly reflected in the integrated peacebuilding strategies. One of the key factors for success in the Peacebuilding Commission's work is the attention of the international community to its peacebuilding activities in the countries of engagement. The Commission and its work, therefore, should be given adequate visibility, through outreach activities, in order to retain this attention.

My delegation is also of the view that, in the cases of Burundi and Sierra Leone, the issue of economic recovery of the post-conflict societies was somewhat less focused on. For furthering the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, we believe attention should also be given to building pluralistic political institutions, creating peace constituencies, restoring an environment of mutual trust, confidence and tolerance and establishing a process of societal reconciliation and healing.

As regards the work of Peacebuilding Commission, Bangladesh from the very outset has advocated the view that post-conflict societies must take charge of their own destiny and that the Commission's work should be based on national ownership. It is gratifying that the Commission has subscribed to an inclusive and nationally driven process aimed at maximizing the involvement of all relevant actors on the ground. In addition, to make peacebuilding initiatives more effective and better suited to realities on the ground, we would like the Commission to include in the integrated peacebuilding strategies domestic initiatives, such as home-grown ideas like microcredit and women's non-formal education, combined with external material support.

The Peacebuilding Commission, on the basis of its operational experience over the first year, has to define the process and timing of disengagement with a country. Before any such disengagement, it should make sure to leave behind an integrated peacebuilding strategy or another mechanism that would make peace self-sustainable even after disengagement. At the same time, the Commission has to expand its operations and chalk out a procedure and basis for the selection of new countries.

We feel that members of the Peacebuilding Commission should be more frequently updated on the operations of the Peacebuilding Fund and that information on disbursements must be shared with adequate lead time. The relationship between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund, and their individual roles, have to be made clear to the stakeholders on the ground in order to dispel confusion as regards eligibility for Peacebuilding Fund support.

For the Peacebuilding Commission, it is just the beginning of a long and arduous journey. As more countries are brought under its consideration, the expectation, responsibilities and complexities of its workload will become heavier. To cope with that, the Peacebuilding Commission and its supporting bodies require incremental political and material support. We, as a member of the Commission, would expect the international community to come forward to assist us in fulfilling our mandate.

It would be grossly remiss of me not to place on record our special tribute to Ambassador Ismael Gaspar Martins of Angola, the first Chair of the Commission, for his wise stewardship, especially at the initial stages of the Commission's work. I also take this opportunity to convey our thanks to Ambassador Johan Løvald of Norway and Ambassador Frank Majoor of the Netherlands for coordinating the country-specific mandate of the Commission. Our thanks go also to Ambassador Carmen María Gallardo Hernández of El Salvador for her stewardship of the Working Group on Lessons Learned.

In closing, I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome and extend the full support of my delegation to the new Chair, Ambassador Yukio Takasu.

Mr. Matussek (Germany): Let me say first of all that Germany fully supports the statement made by the Portuguese presidency of the European Union on behalf of the Union.

Let me thank all those who contributed so greatly to the success of the Peacebuilding Commission in its first session. Let me specifically thank the first Chairman of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission, Ambassador Gaspar Martins of Angola, as well as the two Vice-Chairs, Ambassador Gallardo Hernández of El Salvador and Ambassador Løvald of Norway. Let me also commend Assistant Secretary-General Carolyn McAskie and her colleagues in the Peacebuilding Support Office for the excellent work done. I would also like to congratulate Ambassador Takasu on his election as Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission; I want to wish him all success in his work.

Today's debate on the Peacebuilding Commission's first year of work will help us to evaluate the work done and the results achieved so far, and decide on the way forward for the sixty-second session of the General Assembly and the second year of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission is part of the important reforms of the United Nations. World leaders, at the 2005 World Summit, recognized that international peacebuilding efforts lacked an overall strategic approach and coherence. Countries emerging from conflict face a unique challenge and a high risk of relapsing into violence. The Peacebuilding Commission assists those countries in laying the foundations for sustainable peace and development.

The first year of work of the Peacebuilding Commission was a difficult one. The Commission had to find out how to approach its tasks and how to approach its workload. Provisional rules of procedure for the Commission were adopted after a long consultative process among member States. In addition, a provisional formula was found to ensure the active and productive participation of civil society, including non-governmental organizations, in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. From our point of view, that was an important step. Burundi and Sierra Leone were placed on the agenda of the Commission. The work in the country-specific meetings included, inter alia, field missions, many videoconferences, special briefings and, last but not least, the formulation of integrated peacebuilding strategies.

The report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its first session (A/62/137) provides us with recommendations on what we should try to achieve during second session: to maximize the Commission's impact on the ground and improve interaction with the field; to ensure that the current peacebuilding processes remain on track; to develop monitoring mechanisms for the integrated peacebuilding strategies; and finally, to ensure that challenges and gaps are addressed in a timely and coherent manner.

In addition, I would like to emphasize some specific issues we should look at in the second year of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The first is the issue of coordination. The Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Support Office should strengthen their capacity to make recommendations and to provide information in order to improve the coordination of all relevant actors within and outside the United Nations.

The second is the issue of lessons learned. The Peacebuilding Commission should broaden its agenda by intensifying dialogue on general peacebuilding issues, such as security sector reform and post-conflict national reconciliation, and should draw lessons learned from past experiences. The Working Group on Lessons Learned is a promising first step in that regard.

The third is the issue of strategies. The engagement of the Peacebuilding Commission in Burundi and Sierra Leone is being felt. Discussions and visits have facilitated the coming together of key stakeholders. The critical threats to the peace process in both countries have been addressed in the integrated peacebuilding strategies. The next step should be strengthening the relevance of the strategies as a tool to generate enhanced support for peacebuilding in Burundi, Sierra Leone and other countries.

The fourth is adding real value. Most important is that the Peacebuilding Commission adds real value and does not duplicate efforts in the task of supporting specific countries in building peace. Integrated peacebuilding strategies should set the decisive frameworks for international and national peacebuilding in those countries where the Commission will take a supportive stance.

Those are my main suggestions for our work during the second year of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Achieving stable peace and an effective settlement of armed conflicts is possible only on the basis of a comprehensive strategic approach and agreement. The transition to sustainable socio-economic recovery is accompanied by many difficulties. The danger of renewed conflict is always present in societies where the original causes of the crisis have not been eliminated.

Countries that have emerged from armed conflict should not find themselves plunged into crisis. That is where they must be effectively helped by the Peacebuilding Commission, whose creation, by parallel resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council, was one of the important achievements in the reform of the Organization in accordance with decisions of the 2005 Summit.

A key task of the Commission is to eliminate a serious gap in the international system of post-conflict peacebuilding. It should help to enhance the coordination and the effectiveness of international assistance to countries emerging from crisis, in conjunction with efforts of the United Nations, international financial institutions and the world donor community. We note in particular the Commission's role, in solid interaction with the Governments of the countries receiving assistance, in identifying, prioritizing and targeting donor resources in order to resolve fundamental problems.

The first annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission confirms that the Commission has much practical potential and is capable of becoming one of the most important international mechanisms in that sphere.

The Commission's work, first on Burundi and Sierra Leone, generally deserves a positive assessment. Four extremely important priority areas for strengthening peace in each of those two countries were defined. The process of developing an integrated strategy of peacebuilding was begun and the parametres of the monitoring mechanisms were agreed upon. The practical work of the Commission on specific countries should be transparent and accompanied by an impartial collective analysis and clearly defined priorities for peacebuilding. We anticipate agreed and effective recommendations from it, which will be expected by the recipient countries first of all.

Next year, the Commission will continue its work on resolving questions of strengthening the functional links between international financial institutions, regional organizations and the donor community. Additional attention should be given to improving cooperation on the ground with all actors in the peacebuilding process and to harmonizing the activities of the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Commission with existing coordination mechanisms, first those within the United Nations system. Their interaction with United Nations agencies, in particular in the field, should not disrupt the existing system of operational activities of the Organization but, on the contrary should bolster it.

Of particular importance is the task of strengthening the organic link between the Commission and the Security Council, above all with regard to issues that are on the agenda of both bodies. It is important to ensure timely exchange of

information between both bodies and a clear division of labour and complementarity. Of course, that must be done in parallel with the development of links between the Commission and the Economic and Social Council.

In addition, we cannot but welcome the great deal of work done by the Peacebuilding Support Office, in which hope lies both for improving the work of the Peacebuilding Commission and for managing the Peacebuilding Fund.

We support focusing the activities of the Fund on assisting countries in the earliest stages of emerging from conflict, while the traditional mechanisms for mobilizing development assistance are not yet functioning. We note the Fund's catalytic role in attracting more-permanent mechanisms of support for the post-conflict recovery processes. In our view, that is the area where the Fund should concentrate its work first of all.

I wish to stress the importance of improving the analysis and evaluation of the peacebuilding requirements of relevant countries by the United Nations country teams, which, according to the scope of the Fund, can initiate decisions on giving the country access to Fund resources without approval by the Commission. That places particular responsibility on the Peacebuilding Support Office, which takes the final decision. We are in favour of clarity, transparence and openness of the criteria for giving countries such access. It must first be given to those countries that are dangerously close to the brink of relapsing into conflict. We count on increased accountability in the functioning of the Fund.

Not much time has passed in order to be able to draw exhaustive conclusions on the effectiveness of the work of the Fund. However, in the future it would make sense to think about organizing an independent study of its activities.

A clear manifestation of our support for the Fund is the decision by the Government of Russia to make a 2 million dollar contribution to the Fund annually, starting in 2008. We expect that those funds will truly strengthen the Fund's potential in the above-mentioned areas of its work.

Mr. Scott (United States of America): It is an honour to present the views of my Government on the important work of the Peacebuilding Commission. The Peacebuilding Commission is an innovation with much promise. This plenary item — a discussion of the annual reports of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund — brings to a close the first year of activity by the Commission. In our view, this has been a year of considerable focus on procedural issues, with progress made on building a foundation for the Commission's productive future work.

Sadly, however, we do not believe that the members of the Peacebuilding Commission can look back over this past year and point to tangible contributions to the lives of the people in Sierra Leone and Burundi — the first two countries taken up by the Commission.

In its second year, we look to the Peacebuilding Commission to sharpen its role in promoting dialogue and coordination on critical challenges to stability in the countries on its agenda. We expect that the Commission will do more to draw the international community's attention to the need for sustained long-term engagement in the countries on the agenda. We look for practical engagement on difficult thematic issues where the Commission has a role to play in bringing together stakeholders, in producing best practices and in broadening the donor base.

The agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission will likely broaden over the coming year to include additional countries, beginning with the pending request of Guinea-Bissau that is currently before the Security Council. Members of the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission should reflect on how the specific considerations of candidate countries will best mesh with the strategic vision and multi-year work of the Peacebuilding Commission. In doing so, we suggest that as a fledgling institution, the Commission should walk before it runs. Demonstrating delivery of concrete results in the countries currently on its agenda should have priority over expanding its work elsewhere.

While working from lessons learned in its first year, the Peacebuilding Commission should also consider new ways of providing advice and recommendations. We saw in the Peacebuilding Commission's first year, that while countries on its agenda face many of the same challenges, differing local circumstances dictate unique approaches. As the Peacebuilding Commission takes on new countries, it should not limit itself to promoting a global comprehensive peacebuilding strategies approach to

countries under consideration, but also consider targeted advice and recommendations on specific thematic sectors or even a geographic region.

We do not see the annual reports of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund as reflecting a consensus on the above issues among members of the Peacebuilding Commission. In particular, we invite your attention to the issue of financing missions of the Peacebuilding Commission outlined in paragraph 43 as an issue demanding further discussion. However, in our view, both reports are a useful reference to the challenges and topics currently before the Peacebuilding Commission and we welcome their publication.

In conclusion, may I add our thanks to the current and former Chairmen of the Commission for their hard work in leading the Peacebuilding Commission as it addresses these key issues which confront the international community.

Mr. Hannesson (Iceland): Let me join others in thanking you, Sir, for giving us the opportunity to participate in the meeting of the General Assembly devoted to the important work of the Peacebuilding Commission and its first annual report (A/62/137). Let me also use this opportunity to pay tribute to the former Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission, my colleague Gaspar Martins from Angola, and the two colleagues from Norway and the Netherlands for their steering of the country-specific work on Burundi and Sierra Leone, as well as my colleague from El Salvador, for chairing the Working Group on Lessons Learned. The new Chairman, Ambassador Yukio Takasu, can be assured of our full support and cooperation.

From the outset, Iceland has been a strong supporter of the Peacebuilding Commission. We regard the Commission as a key achievement of the United Nations reform process. The Peacebuilding Commission together with the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund have important roles to play in bridging the gap between conflict and development and focusing on activities in the field.

The Government of Iceland has contributed $1 million to the Peacebuilding Fund and is planning further contributions. We urge Member States to contribute to the Fund. We are pleased to note that more than $230 million has already been pledged or contributed to it.

After one year of operation, it is time to take stock of where we are and offer guidance for our future work. In that context, we warmly welcome the first annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/62/137). This comprehensive and important report clearly indicates that considerable progress has been made towards establishing the working methods of the Commission. We applaud the work of the Organizational Committee of the Commission on organizational and procedural issues. Here I would like to mention the adoption of the provisional rules of procedure and the concept paper setting up the framework for the development of integrated peacebuilding strategies.

The Peacebuilding Commission has identified critical priority areas for peace and consolidation for Burundi and Sierra Leone. The development of an integrated peacebuilding strategy for Burundi is an important step in that regard. Iceland welcomes the fact that an integrated peacebuilding strategy for Sierra Leone has been developed as well. The recommendations of the Commission must be implemented in the countries concerned and within the institutional framework of the United Nations. The Peacebuilding Commission must now build upon that work and further develop its working methods. The underpinnings are already in place. The focus should remain on practical, effective cooperation and avoiding duplication of effort.

The working relationships between the Peacebuilding Commission, the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council should be strengthened through dialogue on a regular basis. Regular meetings between the Peacebuilding Commission Chairs and the Presidents of those bodies would be one possibility. We also need to consider increased cooperation between the Peacebuilding Commission and regional and subregional organizations in order to promote peacebuilding in the countries under consideration.

We are pleased that the Peacebuilding Commission has recognized the link between poverty, weak State capacity and conflict and has ensured that the integrated peacebuilding strategies include job creation, especially for youth, capacity development and the delivery of basic social services as priorities. Only by making substantial progress in those areas can the Peacebuilding Commission help to ensure the sustainability of national peacebuilding efforts.

Iceland remains firmly committed to the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. The success of that body is absolutely dependent on the political will of the countries concerned and the Member States. The main challenge now facing the Peacebuilding Commission is to maximize its impact on the ground. We all have a duty to ensure that the Peacebuilding Commission becomes an effective tool that can contribute in a significant manner to the establishment of peace, stability and development in post-conflict countries. My country is committed to doing its share.

Mr. Hoang Chi Trung (Viet Nam): It is a great honour for me to speak on behalf of the Vietnamese delegation at this important meeting of the General Assembly. My delegation is convinced that our debate today demonstrates our sustained attention to the strengthening of the Peacebuilding Commission and the enhancement of the coordination amongst the principal organs of the United Nations for the sake of sustainable peace and development in the world.

In order to develop an overall strategic and coherent approach to the question of international peacebuilding, world leaders at the 2005 World Summit decided to establish the Peacebuilding Commission, the Peacebuilding Fund and the Peacebuilding Support Office. The new peacebuilding architecture is expected to serve as a dedicated mechanism to address the special needs of conflict-prone countries in various regions of our world.

In that regard, Viet Nam wishes to commend the recent efforts undertaken by the Peacebuilding Commission in the light of General Assembly resolution A/60/180 and Security Council resolution 1645 (2005) respectively. We note with satisfaction that the Organizational Committee has addressed a series of key organizational, procedural and methodological issues in its first year of operation, including the finalization of the operational framework and provisional rules of procedure, the organization of country-specific meetings and the establishment of an ad hoc working group.

The Peacebuilding Fund has also made laudable efforts in mobilizing resources from the international donor community and in examining projects eligible for funding in post-conflict countries. We are even more encouraged by the fact that Sierra Leone and Burundi, the first countries supported by the Peacebuilding Commission, have made remarkable progress in critical areas of national reconstruction and rehabilitation, such as the promotion of good governance, strengthening of the rule of law, reform of justice and the security sector, and capacity-building.

While recognizing the fact that peacebuilding is naturally a complex and long-term process which requires persistent and long-term commitments, my delegation shares the view expressed by various delegations that a lot of ground remains to be covered. A daunting challenge is how the Commission can build up an engaged partnership and active participation among different stakeholders and marshal the resources necessary for stability, recovery and development in war-torn countries. It is therefore necessary for the international community to provide, in a timely manner, adequate resources and support. My delegation fully agrees with the assessment in the report that the main challenge facing the Commission is to maximize its impact on the ground and to make the United Nations peacebuilding architecture an effective instrument of international cooperation in support of countries emerging from conflicts.

The first anniversary of the Peacebuilding Commission has elapsed with both achievements and challenges. If it is to live up to the expectations and aspirations of the international community, improvements should be made in some crucial areas and a number of outstanding issues must be addressed in the coming years. That should include the further development of the working methods of the Commission, the monitoring mechanisms for integrated peacebuilding strategies, and enhanced operational relationships with other intergovernmental bodies as well as regional and subregional organizations.

Enhanced interaction among various stakeholders engaged in post-conflict peacebuilding activities is of vital importance. The United Nations broad experience spanning conflict prevention, mediation, peacekeeping, humanitarian and election assistance, reconstruction and sustainable development must be fully exploited in conjunction with inputs from international financial institutions, non-governmental organizations, civil society and the private sector.

We strongly believe that integrated peacebuilding strategies must fully reflect the socio-economic reconstruction and development priorities of recipient countries, as well as the comparative advantages and

practical commitment of international donors. Such a well-coordinated process, we believe, helps avoid wasteful duplication or misuse and, at the same time, needs periodical review to bring about better outcomes.

We wish to reiterate that the national ownership of post-conflict peacebuilding priority plans and initiatives must remain at the forefront of any effort aimed at sustaining peace, initiating development and promoting post-conflict recovery. Foreign assistance plays a supplementary role and cannot replace home-grown endeavours for enhancing institutional frameworks, reinforcing capacity-building and strengthening legal and administrative systems that ultimately bolster autonomy and self-determination.

My delegation agrees that the future work of the Commission must ensure that peacebuilding processes remain on track and that challenges are addressed in a timely and coherent manner by all relevant actors. In the early phase of its life, the Commission has a number of issues to address in order to improve its effectiveness and broaden its impact on the ground. To that effect, the General Assembly plays the central role in conducting regular reviews of the activities of the Commission, as well as in formulating sound guidance and policies for the effective operation of the Commission.

Mr. Heller (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation welcomes this opportunity to consider the report submitted by the Peacebuilding Commission at the end of its first session, pursuant to resolution 60/180.

Mexico acknowledges the work done by Ambassador Gaspar Martins of Angola, who had the sensitive task of leading the Organizational Committee at the beginning of its work. We express the hope that the chairmanship of Ambassador Yukio Takasu of Japan will be crowned with success.

My delegation also commends the dedication shown by the coordinators of the country-specific configurations, Ambassador Johan Løvald of Norway and Ambassador Frank Majoor of the Netherlands, as well as by Ambassador Gallardo Hernández of El Salvador in her work as coordinator of the working group on lessons learned.

We congratulate Ms. Caroline McAskie, Assistant Secretary-General in the Peacebuilding Support Office, on her work and commitment during this innovating phase of the new peacebuilding architecture being put together by our Organization.

The recognition of major gaps in the United Nations peacebuilding efforts in countries emerging from conflict, as well as the recurrence of violence in some national situations, led our heads of State and Government at the 2005 World Summit to agree to establish the Commission — one of the concrete outcomes of the United Nations reform process.

During the Commission's first year of operations, it has become clear that the peacebuilding process must be approached on the ground and by taking into consideration the specificities of the various countries concerned. No model repeats itself; every country has its own characteristics and history. Creative proposals are therefore required to build frameworks and programmes that harmonize with national realities. Mexico therefore believes that the Commission must be directed by the following guiding points.

First, the full consent of a country and its Government that may be included in the Commission's programme is necessary. Secondly, the process must be defined on the basis of priorities established by each Government concerned. Thirdly, national, regional and international actors must cooperate on the basis of a common vision of purposes and priorities.

While we recognize that, as a recently established body, the Commission is still being defined and its working methods developed, we are encouraged by its Organizational Committee's decision to establish, in close coordination with the Government of Burundi, an integrated peacebuilding strategy with the support of the United Nations and members of civil society. We are also pleased that a similar strategy is being developed with the Government of Sierra Leone.

We believe that the Commission should redouble its efforts to improve its approaches and working methods during its second session, when it will also have to address pending issues. Among those, we note the need to establish tracking and monitoring mechanisms for integrated peacebuilding strategies in countries under its consideration. My delegation feels that, without such mechanisms, it will be difficult to assess the impact of the Commission's work on the ground. Another important task will be to ensure that national Governments are able to deliver peace dividends to their peoples through economic recovery programmes.

Mexico also considers it essential that socio-economic conditions in the post-conflict phase be given priority in the context of peacebuilding efforts so that the proper balance can be struck between the demand for reform in the judicial and security sectors and in the sphere of the rule of law on the one hand and meeting the basic needs of the population on the other.

Moreover, in order to promote United Nations system-wide coherence, the Commission should strengthen its coordinating role and its relationships with other United Nations organs, in particular the Economic and Social Council, as well as with regional organizations and entities outside the United Nations system.

Establishing a lasting peace is a process in which the Commission, as the coordinating body, has the challenge of promoting a common vision among all concerned actors, with a view to overcoming the enormous challenge of transforming a society emerging from painful conflict into one in which peace, security and development prevail.

We welcome the Secretary-General's report on the operation and activities of the Peacebuilding Fund (A/62/138), which enables Member States to fulfil their mandate to provide policy guidance on the use of the Fund. My delegation understands that because of the recent implementation of the Fund — in January 2007 for Burundi and in March 2007 for Sierra Leone — it is premature to analyse its impact on peacebuilding initiatives in those two countries. However, we are pleased with progress in both Burundi and Sierra Leone, the latter being where the Fund helped support national authorities during the successful electoral process in September. National ownership of a peace process and the Fund's catalytic effect in encouraging the long-term commitment of donors are the two basic principles defining the Fund and should continue to guide its operations.

We support the Peacebuilding Support Office, and we call for the streamlining of the Office's procedures, on the basis of the lessons learned in the first nine months of the operation of the Fund, so as to further optimize the use of resources and to make access more flexible in order to address the most pressing problems of peacebuilding during the early stages of the process. The Fund can take successful experiences into account in considering future cases.

Although the Fund relies on voluntary contributions, it is important that it receive, on a predictable basis, financial resources with which to carry out its short-term and medium-term activities. Without adequate resources, the Commission will not be able to completely fulfil its mandate. Mexico supports the work of the Commission and it has recently conveyed its decision to make a financial contribution to the Fund.

Without disregarding the challenges inherent in these matters, Mexico is confident of the contribution that the Commission can make to the work of the Organization. For this reason, it is important that Member States closely follow its work and ensure its development in order to guarantee the greatest possible impact in meeting the goals that led to its creation.

Mr. Liu Zhenmin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation wishes to thank Ambassador Takasu, Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission, for presenting to the sixty-second session of the General Assembly the Commission's report on its first session (A/62/137). Our thanks go also to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his report on the operation of the Peacebuilding Fund (A/62/138). We support the conclusions and recommendations contained in those reports.

Two years ago, world leaders unanimously decided to establish a United Nations peacebuilding commission, bringing hope for peace to people trapped in conflicts. As a member of the Commission, the Chinese delegation is pleased to see that, under the leadership of Ambassador Gaspar Martins of Angola, Chairman of the Commission at its first session, the Peacebuilding Commission achieved fruitful results in its work over the past year in the following areas. First of all, it established sound provisional rules of procedure and guidelines to ensure the orderly and consistent conduct of its work. Secondly, it set up flexible and diverse formats for its meetings and built partnerships with all sides on an equal footing. Finally, it encouraged ownership by the countries concerned, winning their trust and establishing good working relationships with them.

Mr. İlkin (Turkey), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Of course, as a newly founded body, the Peacebuilding Commission still faces a host of challenges, including how to enhance its value-added

role, to coordinate with other United Nations organs and to increase its efficiency. While it has full confidence in the Peacebuilding Commission's work in the coming year, the Chinese delegation wishes to make a few suggestions on ways to improve it.

First, the Peacebuilding Commission should further define its role as an advisory body. The relevant provisions of the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions should be scrupulously implemented. The Peacebuilding Commission provides advice both to the General Assembly and the Security Council and to the countries concerned. Therefore, the Commission should marshal resources both within and outside the system and should make concrete recommendations that are effective and to the point.

Secondly, the Peacebuilding Commission should properly define its relationships with other United Nations organs. Within the United Nations system, it should increase its interaction with the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. It should also make full use of the resources of United Nations funds and programmes on the ground to prevent duplication and waste.

Thirdly, the Peacebuilding Commission should strike a balance between partnership and ownership. The partnerships established by the international community through the Peacebuilding Commission with countries concerned enable the international community to provide necessary assistance to those countries. But a partner can be no more than a participating party: the destiny of the countries concerned is in their own hands. The international community should not take everything over from them.

Fourthly, the Peacebuilding Commission should give consideration to the special needs of African countries. African hot-spot issues account for some two thirds of the items on the Security Council's agenda, and most United Nations peacekeeping operations are in Africa. The Peacebuilding Commission should continue to make this one of the important factors in taking on new countries to be included in its agenda.

I would also like to mention, in particular, a major component of the Peacebuilding Commission: the Peacebuilding Fund. As a new financing mechanism, the Fund is of a great significance for launching relevant peacebuilding programmes. Its operations over the past year have demonstrated its key role as a catalyst. While by and large satisfied with the financing and functioning of the Fund, the Chinese delegation looks forward to efforts by the Secretary-General to ensure that the Fund is more transparent and better conforms to relevant standards and norms. The Chinese Government will redeem its pledge to the Fund on time.

Nothing in the world is more precious than peace, and no approach is better than cooperation. The Peacebuilding Commission embodies everyone's aspirations for peaceful reconstruction and our sincere expectations of win-win results through cooperation. Let us join hands and contribute to a bright future for the Peacebuilding Commission.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): I would like to begin by thanking the President of the General Assembly for organizing this important debate. It offers a very useful opportunity to take stock of the work of the Peacebuilding Commission and of the Peacebuilding Fund following their first anniversaries. It also allows us to chart the challenges that we still face.

I would like to align myself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Portugal on behalf of the European Union.

But first, I would like to offer some tributes in recognition of the enormous energy and time that members of the Peacebuilding Commission have put into the establishment of the Commission. Its first year was always going to be a challenge, as there had been no precedents set for its work. I would like to thank the previous Chairmen of the Organizational Committee, Ambassadors Gaspar Martins and Oshima, and the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support and her team; and I would like to congratulate the new Chairman, Ambassador Takasu, on his appointment. I would also like to express my country's thanks to the Netherlands and Norway for the achievements accomplished so far in the country-specific work in Burundi and Sierra Leone and to pay tribute to the authorities of those two countries who have joined us in many video conferences to talk about the issues that the Commission is dealing with. Finally, I would like to thank El Salvador for taking forward the work on lessons learned and Ghana for taking on the role of Vice-Chair.

In the first year of the Peacebuilding Commission, thanks to the engagement of the Governments of Burundi and Sierra Leone, the United

Nations teams in both countries and, of course, their Permanent Representatives, we have seen a constant reminder of the centrality of the Commission's main focus: its country-level work. National ownership of the peacebuilding process is vital; so too is the need for broad and substantive consultation among all stakeholders in shaping the peacebuilding agenda.

The progress articulated in the annual reports before us demonstrates the achievements made. These need to be built upon if we are to ensure that the Peacebuilding Commission delivers on its ultimate goal and its ultimate test: helping to prevent countries from relapsing into conflict and helping them to build a solid foundation for peace and stability. Over the past year, there has been much talk about how the Commission can add value. We consider that where it can have impact lies in its two main functions: first, providing a forum where the international community can help address political barriers to peacebuilding; and secondly, helping bring coherence and harmonization to the international community's efforts in the countries under consideration.

Setting up the Joint Verification and Monitoring Mechanism in Burundi and completing the Sierra Leone Compact in the coming months will be important steps in defining the commitments of all parties. I think it is important that we have two slightly different mechanisms for each country, with the main point being that they are tailored to what the country on the agenda needs. Living up to the relevant responsibilities — whether they be those of the Government, of political parties or of Commission members — will be the key test. But there is a need to ensure that that does not become just a mechanical process. The Peacebuilding Commission needs to stay alive to the very difficult challenges faced by countries emerging from conflict. That is why my Government is greatly encouraged by the approach used in the recent conclusions and recommendations of the Commission that followed the report of the Chair of the country-specific meeting on Burundi.

We believe that those conclusions and recommendations demonstrate the importance of the advice and the relationships that the Peacebuilding Commission has with Governments, the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the international financial institutions and other partners. Strengthening those relationships will be essential for improving the impact of the Commission's work and for ensuring that it is practical in its approach.

I see five issues that spring from that point. First, at some point in the near future, the Peacebuilding Commission will need to define more clearly how it works with its parent bodies and with the Economic and Social Council. Perhaps that will become clearer with time as practical precedents are established.

Secondly, the country-specific work of the Peacebuilding Commission should not remain static. It is important that further countries be referred to the Commission's agenda this year. This should be linked to the capacities of the Commission and of the Peacebuilding Support Office. Both need to define what their limits are.

Thirdly, in taking on new countries, the Peacebuilding Commission needs to consider from the outset what its niche is in the country concerned. It needs to take stock of what plans and programmes already exist and to identify critical gaps. In addressing these, the Commission needs to take stock of the broad range of skills, experiences and resources of its members.

Fourthly, it is important that the Peacebuilding Commission's relationship with the countries on its agenda not be an excessive burden on them. It needs to be clear about what it expects of a country and vice versa. We see that building a solid partnership is the key to success.

Fifthly, as a number of other speakers have mentioned, the Peacebuilding Support Office needs to build on its work to date if it is to become the United Nations hub for peacebuilding. The Office should have strong links with all other parts of the United Nations system working on peacebuilding, and it should be able to signpost United Nations country teams to relevant skills and best practices. That will also further the work of the Commission in promoting and adopting best practices.

As far as the Peacebuilding Fund is concerned, we welcome the establishment of the Advisory Group, and we look forward to receiving the paper that it has commissioned to produce strategic guidance on use of the Fund. It will need to provide greater clarity about the structural relationship between the Commission and the Fund and about areas where strategically greater ties can be forged. It will need to take stock of the

various settings in which the Fund can be employed in order to ensure that it can add the most value possible.

With regard to sequencing the work of the Peacebuilding Commission and of the Peacebuilding Fund, the United Kingdom believes that, where countries on the Commission's agenda have existing donor mechanisms, the Commission's strategy work needs to come before the bulk of Fund funding. That will enable the Commission to give strategic guidance on the use of the funds. But ultimately, the Fund is likely to have the greatest value in those countries coming out of conflict where there are no established donor mechanisms or where opportunities suddenly arise for Peacebuilding Fund resources to provide a catalytic role in promoting peacebuilding. In that respect, we are encouraged by the recent use of the emergency, or third, window of the Fund for Côte d'Ivoire and the Central African Republic.

Finally, the United Kingdom's overall assessment of the Peacebuilding Commission and Peacebuilding Fund is, like that of many of our colleagues, broadly positive. In their second year, the Commission and the Fund need to consolidate their work to date and to ensure that these issues are taken up and developed. We believe that it is incumbent upon all of us to invest our time, money and political capital to ensure that the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund reduce the risk of the recurrence of conflict. The United Kingdom is committed to building partnerships to that end.

Mr. Sen (India): Thank you, Mr. İlkin, for presiding over this meeting; I am very pleased that you are presiding over a meeting in which I am taking part. I would also like to thank the President of the General Assembly for scheduling today's timely discussion on the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund.

Let me begin by expressing my appreciation to Japan for the work that it has already accomplished as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, to the Permanent Representative of Angola for his work over most of the past year as first Chairman of the Commission, and to the Chairs of the country-specific configurations and the Chair of the Working Group on Lessons Learned.

We associate ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). We thank Mr. Raymond Wolfe for his work as NAM coordinator in the Peacebuilding Commission.

India is strongly committed to the objectives and work of the Peacebuilding Commission, and has also contributed to the resources of the Peacebuilding Fund. We have read the report (A/62/137) of the Peacebuilding Commission, as well as the report (A/62/138) of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund. We note the important points made in those reports. Indeed, since we were associated with the finalization of the report of the Peacebuilding Commission, we are well acquainted with it. These reports will be of lasting value to the international community and to the Peacebuilding Commission as we chart our course in the area of peace consolidation in the year ahead.

Without dwelling on these reports, which are public documents, I must point out that much has been left unsaid. In the case of the Peacebuilding Commission that is natural, since multilaterally negotiated reports inevitably highlight the lowest common denominator. Nevertheless, it encapsulates several of the more important achievements of the group, which are not inconsiderable developments and are worthy of praise. However, I would like to focus upon some elements that are not reflected, but are of central importance, in India's perspective, for the future work of the Peacebuilding Commission.

First, we need to collectively exert greater efforts to move beyond debating issues of process to implementing measures. Process issues distract us from the real purpose of the Peacebuilding Commission, which is to assist countries on the agenda with focused and topical advice through the marshalling of resources. To us, it seems evident that we can only resolve this problem by confronting it squarely, and not by bypassing it and moving on. Therefore, while it is understandable that some see the empowerment of the country-specific configurations as a means to deliver concrete outcomes, that is not a durable solution. The solution lies in making the Organizational Committee, which is the steering mechanism of the Peacebuilding Commission, work better. We must therefore harmonize the deliberations of both the Organizational Committee and the country-specific configurations, and make both more result-oriented.

Secondly, while providing advice is both logical and natural for a body that is defined as an advisory

body, there is a need to also listen to those whom we wish to assist. Sometimes the discourse in the Peacebuilding Commission, whether within the Organizational Committee or the country-specific configurations, does not suggest that this is the case. At one level, countries on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission do need to hear the full gamut of views and suggestions made with the best of intentions by each of us. Providing good, constructive and candid advice dispassionately is important, and therefore it is difficult. But that is not nearly as difficult as listening carefully to what the various actors on the ground are saying. While their views may divert from our advice, meaningful advice must involve a two-way dialogue, not one-way transmission. In that connection, it would be helpful if the countries concerned could also tell us clearly the areas in which their need for assistance is most critical. Such inputs should form the basis of more focused, action-oriented and practical discussions within the Peacebuilding Commission.

I might add, in that context, that the Peacebuilding Commission could certainly do better — at least we could certainly be more creative — with regard to the form in which the Commission provides advice. For instance it would have a better impact if the Peacebuilding Commission were to facilitate access by targeted countries to eminent specialists who have the expertise to provide advice in key areas of peacebuilding.

Thirdly, while it is important to focus upon the advisory role of the Peacebuilding Commission, there is occasionally a tendency to neglect its role in focusing international attention, and in particular assisting in the marshalling of resources. Important though it may be, advice alone will not consolidate peace. The mobilization of resources is the key vehicle by which post-conflict societies can begin to address critical issues in the area of peace consolidation. Thus far, this aspect has received inadequate attention in the Peacebuilding Commission. We look forward to discussing creative solutions by which the Commission could be more involved with the central aspect of peace consolidation.

In this context, I should like to draw attention to the Peacebuilding Fund. We welcome its operationalization and the fact that it has begun to disburse catalytic funding to Sierra Leone and Burundi, as recommended by the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission, and also to other countries in need of emergency assistance. However, while the operation of the Peacebuilding Fund is certainly within the letter of the resolution that established it, we are not fully convinced that it is operating fully within the spirit of that resolution. To be candid, far more transparency is needed in the operation of the Peacebuilding Fund: much more consultation with the Peacebuilding Commission and more prompt relaying of information to the Commission regarding the utilization of funds. This is essential not only for purposes of information, but also for the credibility of the Peacebuilding Fund. Ultimately, since the Fund is based on contributions from Member States, it will only detract from its sustainability if it is not more transparent and consultative.

My fourth point relates to the capacity of the Peacebuilding Commission and its support mechanism, the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO). While the PBSO has done well in assisting the Peacebuilding Commission, even as recruitment for the PBSO was under way, there is now a need for greater involvement on the part of the larger United Nations system — in New York and on the ground — in the work of the Commission. The PBSO alone cannot compensate for the entire United Nations system. Other arms of the Secretariat, including the United Nations country team concerned, must provide information to the Peacebuilding Commission on developments on the ground in the target countries where the Commission is involved. That is particularly so given that the Peacebuilding Commission is comprised of Member States that may not always have diplomatic representation on the ground in the countries concerned. We all know that access to good, succinct and relevant information from the ground is usually priceless. That is nowhere more the case than in the Peacebuilding Commission.

The last, although certainly not the least, point relates to perspective. We must keep in mind that the ultimate goal of our collective efforts is to enable countries on the agenda to develop the capacity to implement the relevant programmes and to consolidate peace independent of our direct involvement. That is to say, irrespective of how many actors we may wish to listen to on the ground, the protagonist can only be one, the Government of the country concerned. The primary focus cannot but be to strengthen the capacity of a post-conflict State to govern effectively and to

govern well. If it does so, it will be able to mobilize human and material resources to achieve development. It is development that is the most enduring guarantee of any long-term peace-consolidation strategy. Only then will we have truly succeeded in our efforts.

I would like to conclude by once again underlining India's commitment to the fullest participation in the Peacebuilding Commission and in continuing to work to make that body not only effective but, above all, relevant to the challenges for which it was created.

Mr. Lacroix (France) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to thank the President for having organized today's especially timely debate.

First of all, I should like to say that France fully associates itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Portugal on behalf of the European Union. I shall therefore limit myself to a few brief comments.

The stakes in the success of the Peacebuilding Commission are considerable, and are commensurate with the challenges posed by post-conflict stabilization. Member States gathered at the highest level in this Hall to collectively set a very ambitious goal for the Commission — one well beyond the establishment of a new bureaucratic body. I believe that it is important to keep that fact in mind and ensure that we together honour the commitments that were made. France believes that to be the purpose of this debate.

Following its first year of functioning, the Peacebuilding Commission must now begin full operations. Much has already been accomplished in that regard. My delegation would like to pay tribute to Mr. Gaspar Martins, Permanent Representative of Angola and the Commission's previous Chairperson. We have now established a process for bringing together all the actors in a given situation and putting in place a strategy to pool their efforts. In that connection, I should like to refer to the work done to produce the Strategic Framework for consolidating peace in Burundi, which focuses on a number of limited priorities and commitments tailored to the crucial stakes involved at the current stage of peacebuilding in that country. This document was prepared in close cooperation with the Government of Burundi and, equally important, with political parties, civil society and, more generally, with all other stakeholders on the ground.

The Peacebuilding Commission must now move to an operational phase and guide the implementation of the Strategic Framework. In conjunction with locally established mechanisms, that will entail providing support for the necessary efforts and initiatives and following up progress by ensuring that deadlines are met. France hopes that similar efforts will soon be undertaken with regard to Sierra Leone. In that connection, we look forward to the return of Ambassador Majoor from his visit to Freetown, where a new, democratically elected Government has just begun its work.

The issue of inscribing new countries on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission has now arisen. In accordance with its role in that regard, the Security Council is currently seized of the matter. France believes that this issue is inextricably linked to the ability of the Peacebuilding Commission to address the situations on its agenda and produce tangible results for those countries. With that aim in mind, we are debating the issue openly and imaginatively.

The need to produce results should also guide the Commission's working methods. To be more efficient, the Commission should take full advantage of new information and communications technologies, as it has begun to do through its frequent use of videoconferencing. France would like to thank the Secretariat for its support in that regard, and to encourage it to continue. In that connection, the upcoming consideration of the Commission's Internet website will be an opportunity to think about establishing a genuine platform for discussion among all stakeholders.

Along with the Peacebuilding Support Office, the Peacebuilding Fund, which is intended to play a catalytic role, is an important tool in ensuring that the Commission is able to concentrate on pressing priorities, the filling of gaps and producing concrete results. France believes it essential that the operations of the Peacebuilding Fund be fully in line with the work of the Commission in its various configurations vis-à-vis the countries on its agenda and also its work in other areas. Given that the Peacebuilding Commission is a new tool, the Commission must fully adhere to the need for coherence and integration in the

efforts of the entire international community, which called for the establishment of the Commission.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to reiterate the need to remain true to the prevailing spirit at the time of the Commission's establishment, a body whose basic goal is to bring actors together in the post-conflict process so as to ensure better synergy of efforts, fill gaps where necessary, avoid duplication and promote the international community's efforts in a given situation. That requires in particular the close involvement of those who are able to provide expertise and resources. That is especially the case with international financial institutions, which are in fact actors and should play their full role in that process. It also requires the long-term active involvement of the countries concerned in a spirit of national ownership. Countries must also have a clear understanding of what the Commission is and is not. The Peacebuilding Commission must remain focused on each situation and its peacebuilding priorities. Nothing would affect the success of the Commission more than dispersed effort.

Lastly, I would like to say that my delegation has full trust in Japan's new chairmanship of the Peacebuilding Commission. We are certain that it will take into account all the elements I have just referred to. More generally, we are confident that it will ensure the strengthening of the Commission and the achievement of tangible results, which is of course our common goal.

Mr. Natalegawa (Indonesia): Let me first express our gratitude to the President for convening this important joint debate on the report (A/62/137) of the Peacebuilding Commission and the report of the Peacebuilding Fund (A/62/138). We are thankful to the Secretary-General for the presentation of his report on the Peacebuilding Fund. We are also thankful to the Peacebuilding Commission for its first annual report.

Indonesia associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement caucus in the Peacebuilding Commission.

The rationales for establishing the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund were to support fragile societies recovering from the devastation of war, prevent a relapse into conflict and address gaps in post-conflict peacebuilding efforts.

Having been entrusted with the responsibility of being a member of the Peacebuilding Commission, we are particularly pleased to see the Commission and Peacebuilding Fund come of age during their first year of operation. Having been involved in the Peacebuilding Commission during its first year, we would like to offer some remarks that we hope will contribute to making the international peacebuilding architecture more robust.

First, our deliberations in the Peacebuilding Commission have rightly emphasized the importance of addressing good governance, the rule of law, security sector reform, the fight against corruption, and human rights for all, which are the necessary ingredients for the establishment of a pluralistic and tolerant society. While those issues are of relevance in crafting a sound peace consolidation strategy, the Peacebuilding Commission should provide equal attention to the issue of development. There is overwhelming evidence that lasting peace cannot be achieved in the absence of economic development and an improvement in the capacities of the State.

It is not a coincidence that 9 out of 10 countries that have experienced conflict at one point or other since 1990 are impoverished and have the lowest human development indicators. Even when there has been a formal peace agreement, the vicious cycle of poverty and instability has heightened the risk of relapse into violence. In his report on the work of the Organization, the Secretary-General states that "there can be no development without peace and no peace without development, always in the spirit of respect for human rights and the fundamental freedoms of humankind" (*A/62/1, para. 42*).

This conviction should be implemented in a concrete manner in our deliberations to draw up peacebuilding strategies for countries on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Secondly, it is very well understood by all Members of the United Nations that national ownership is a fundamental principle in peacebuilding processes. The Peacebuilding Commission needs to maintain this as its core principle, and practise it. It should be willing to listen attentively and to pay heed to the national Governments concerned. We also need to go the extra mile to listen more carefully to what people in the field genuinely need. There should be listening

with an open mind, without superfluous preconceptions as to what may be needed in the countries concerned.

We agree that the voices of civil society and other relevant stakeholders in the field are essential to enhance national ownership. Such a perspective is consistent with the fact that, as a matter of principle, the voice of a democratically elected Government is the prime source for the Peacebuilding Commission's consideration, as it is only an elected Government that can be held accountable by the people through the vote. Partnership and synergy between Governments and civil society is key.

Thirdly, the integrated peacebuilding strategies (IPS) proposed by the Commission will only contribute to laying the foundations for sustainable recovery and the consolidation of peace if they are truly comprehensive and fully supported by the international community, including with the full involvement and support of the Bretton Woods institutions and the other relevant actors.

Fourthly, the integrated peacebuilding strategies laid out by the Peacebuilding Commission are only strategies and promises. Their progress will need to be monitored. The report of the Peacebuilding Commission states that a monitoring mechanism in that regard will be developed. We would underline the fact that such a mechanism, as necessary as it is, should not be too complicated and place an unnecessary burden on Governments, which face severe capacity constraints. It must also be evident that the responsibilities of all sides in any monitoring tool are balanced and in keeping with the essence of the global partnership for development.

Fifthly, as has also been very aptly stated in the conclusion of the report of the Peacebuilding Commission, the biggest challenge is how to implement peacebuilding strategies in the field in a concrete manner. Fine-tuning efforts by the peacebuilding system in New York should have an impact on the ground that is felt directly by the local community. Maximum effect will be achieved if the Peacebuilding Commission focuses on being practical and results-oriented.

Moreover, in order to have an impact on the countries concerned, the Commission needs to intensify its efforts at bringing together all relevant actors to marshal resources. Apart from taking this into account in its country configurations, the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission can explore that issue as a specific subject. In that context, the Committee may wish to explore engagement with non-traditional partners and the corporate sector, which has experienced the rise of numerous organizations interested in having a double bottom line — on profit and social-welfare investments.

Recommendations for coordination by the Commission are another crucial aspect that will enhance cooperation and coherence in the field of international post-conflict issues, thereby enhancing synergies on the ground.

There is also a need to perhaps consider developing, with the assistance of the Peacebuilding Support Office, a template communications strategy that can be utilized with case-specific adjustments in different scenarios.

The ability of the Peacebuilding Commission to garner international attention long after conflict stories slip from media headlines is intrinsic to its capacity for advocacy and resource mobilization.

In conclusion, I would like to share with the General Assembly a few thoughts on how Indonesia views the important role of the Assembly in ensuring that the peacebuilding machinery of the United Nations functions well to generate maximum output in the field.

The General Assembly needs to enhance its interaction with the Peacebuilding Commission. The Assembly could provide recommendations to the Commission in leading efforts to consolidate peace. The General Assembly has a role in, and the mandate for, the overall policy guidelines in peacebuilding-related matters, as the Assembly has the unique capacity to address the issues of security and development.

The Economic and Social Council can also play an important role, with its capacity for advocacy and the technical capabilities of its various commissions and subsidiary bodies. There must be regular interaction between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Economic and Social Council, where the relevant lessons learned and best practices can be shared.

Another contribution that the General Assembly could make would be to assist the Peacebuilding Commission in carrying out its mandate to marshal

resources. Among other things, the General Assembly could encourage Member States to contribute to the Peacebuilding Fund. The role of the Fund is critical in providing quick and concrete peace dividends. At the same time, the General Assembly can monitor how resources from the Peacebuilding Fund are being used. There is also a need to speed up the process of making disbursements from the Fund, to see to it that projects are well coordinated with other mechanisms inside and outside the United Nations and to ensure that duplication is minimized.

Before I conclude, allow me to reiterate Indonesia's commitment to the cause of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund. We will continue to engage with others towards our aim of ensuring that both bodies produce tangible results.

The Acting President: I wish the representative of Indonesia continued success in his new and important assignment.

Mr. Cho Hyun (Republic of Korea): My delegation would first like to join others in thanking the members of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Secretary-General for their tireless efforts to put the Commission on a sound footing in its first year. We also appreciate the excellent work done by Ambassador Ismael Gaspar Martins of Angola, the first Chairperson of the Commission. Let me also convey my congratulations to Ambassador Takasu of Japan on his nomination as the Commission's next Chairperson.

My delegation notes with satisfaction that the Peacebuilding Commission is already playing a proactive role in the promotion of international peace and security, despite the fact that it was launched less than a year ago. Burundi and Sierra Leone, which were referred to the Commission for its consideration, are cases in point. We are pleased that the Commission has been cooperating closely with those two countries to draw up comprehensive plans to consolidate peace and reduce their risk of relapsing into conflict.

These early outcomes demonstrate the potential of the Peacebuilding Commission. Nevertheless, there are still procedural details to be ironed out. We hope that this process will be completed soon, thereby allowing the Peacebuilding Commission to focus its attention more fully on its substantive work.

Peacebuilding is a long-term and very costly process. It requires a holistic and synergistic approach, including through the coordination of the peacebuilding work of the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and such other actors as international financial institutions. My delegation therefore welcomes the serious efforts that the Peacebuilding Commission has made to bring together those various actors, as well as civil society and regional organizations. We encourage the Commission to continue such efforts.

Member States should support the Peacebuilding Fund, in order to give the Peacebuilding Commission the financial resources necessary to carry out its work. In this regard, my delegation is pleased to note from the report (A/62/138) of the Secretary-General that, as of July 2007, the Peacebuilding Fund had received pledges and contributions exceeding 90 per cent of the $250 million funding target. The Republic of Korea has contributed $3 million. We hope that, as the Peacebuilding Commission continues to demonstrate its value, Member States will respond by contributing greater resources to the Fund.

In peacebuilding efforts, time is of the essence. My delegation is concerned that, at present, several months transpire between the announcement of an allocation to a country and the first disbursement. As the Peacebuilding Fund was conceived as a way to respond rapidly to immediate peacebuilding needs, serious efforts should be made to significantly shorten the delay.

In terms of the Peacebuilding Commission's work in post-conflict societies, my delegation recognizes the concerns of many Member States with regard to national ownership. We believe that sustainable peace can only be built with the active participation of the national authorities of the countries involved. Peace and security within each State are most appropriately and effectively maintained by a fully functioning national Government. Peacebuilding efforts should therefore serve to strengthen, not weaken, national Governments.

The reality, however, is that peacebuilding efforts are most often needed in situations where national Governments have been severely undermined, or where their very legitimacy has been brought into question. Even in extreme cases where there is no competent

national authority, the international community still has a responsibility to support post-conflict peacebuilding.

The Republic of Korea is a strong supporter of international peacebuilding efforts. Indeed, our own history of recovery from conflict helps us to recognize the tremendous value of international engagement. That is why we supported the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund. We have also participated in United Nations activities in Timor-Leste and other post-conflict situations. Our commitment to the peacebuilding work of the United Nations remains firm. We look forward to seeing the Peacebuilding Commission take on an increasingly proactive role, thereby contributing significantly to United Nations efforts to ensure peace, stability, development, the rule of law and the protection of human rights.

The Acting President: I wish the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea continued success in his new and important assignment.

Mr. Løvald (Norway): The establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission was a concrete expression of the international community's commitment to improve and expand its efforts in the area of peacebuilding. The achievements of the Peacebuilding Commission have already been substantial, despite the brief period of its existence. I shall limit my remarks to highlighting a few of the issues that my delegation believes we must pay attention to in the time to come. The full text of my statement will be circulated in the Hall.

Relevance on the ground must be our first peacebuilding requirement. As Jan Eliasson, one of the President's predecessors, said at the inaugural meeting of the Peacebuilding Commission, it is in the country-specific settings that the work of the Peacebuilding Commission will ultimately be judged.

To make a difference on the ground, it is essential to rally all those who can make a difference in our work. That includes Member States of the United Nations, institutional donors and non-State actors. Civil society, media, the private sector and other stakeholders play an important part in consolidating peace in any given country. We need to find ways to further include these actors in our work. It is my strong hope that, in its second year, the Commission will spend more time on outreach activities, so that the peacebuilding agenda will have even broader ownership when we take stock of where we are one year from now.

A well-functioning peacebuilding architecture is our second peacebuilding requirement. Let me through the President, take this opportunity to commend Assistant Secretary-General McAskie and the other members of Peacebuilding Support Office for their work in support of the Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund. The role of the Peacebuilding Support Office as a focal point and coordinator for peacebuilding within the United Nations system at the strategic level is an important element in the peacebuilding architecture. We encourage the Peacebuilding Support Office, working in cooperation with other parts of the United Nations system, to continue to clarify the role of the Office in this regard. It is also imperative that the Peacebuilding Support Office be fully funded from the regular budget.

It goes without saying that the new peacebuilding architecture must not duplicate what already exists. United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies have, and will continue to have, well-defined responsibilities. We value their contributions and call for their continued support.

Norway welcomes the Secretary-General's report (A/62/138) on the Peacebuilding Fund. The Fund will not live up to its expectations unless it has a distinct catalytic role in terms of short-term gap-filling and longer-term resource mobilization. The Peacebuilding Commission and the Secretary-General, along with the countries concerned, must consider how this aspect can be better addressed.

Continued attention to needs in Burundi and Sierra Leone, while opening the door for others, is the third requirement. It is our view that peacebuilding in Sierra Leone and Burundi is now more of a priority — nationally as well as internationally — than it was one year ago. Our attention on these two counties must remain strong and focused in the year to come. Simultaneously, the Peacebuilding Commission must open the door to other countries. However, we will have to realize that not too many countries can be on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission at a given time. Moreover, the involvement of the Peacebuilding Commission can be in parallel to a peacekeeping operation: it is not an issue of either-or but, instead, of complementarity. This is something for the Security Council to take into account.

National ownership is the fourth requirement. In this connection, I want to refer to the Peacebuilding Commission's involvement with Burundi. I am humbled and honoured to have been the Vice-Chairperson of the Commission in its first year. I would like to thank the members of the Commission for entrusting me with the chairmanship of the Commission's work on Burundi for yet another year.

It was a pleasure to work with the Government of Burundi during that time. It was particularly impressive that the Government worked so closely and effectively with the Commission to conclude the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in Burundi in June of this year. I would also like to express my gratitude to Youssef Mahmoud, Executive Representative of the Secretary-General, and his team in the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi. We were equally pleased with the consultative process in Burundi during the development of the Strategic Framework, as well as with the active participation of a variety of stakeholders.

We must never forget that Burundians have ownership over the consolidation of peace in their country. The Peacebuilding Commission is an advisory body. Its job is to provide support and advice, never to take over national efforts.

Flexibility in working methods is the last requirement for achieving success in peacebuilding. Peacebuilding is a multifaceted undertaking and therefore has an impact on how we conduct our work. The Peacebuilding Commission has set a new standard in the areas of international partnership and honest dialogue. This would not have been possible without close cooperation with the Governments and United Nations missions in the countries on the Commission's agenda, or without the collective determination of all members of the Commission to contribute to the consolidation of peace. It is not only a matter of doing things better; it is also about doing things differently. Peacebuilding is a challenge to the traditional intergovernmental way of doing business. Our challenges on the ground are concrete. As we have already done, we must value flexibility and pragmatism in our approach to peacebuilding.

The Peacebuilding Commission offers us new opportunities to support peace and a better future for people in post-conflict countries. Momentum has now been created, to which we must all contribute if we wish to maintain it.

Mr. Hoscheit (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): This debate, which we welcome, is the first opportunity since the debates held at the beginning of February in the General Assembly and the Security Council to assess the work of the Peacebuilding Commission since its establishment and the beginning of its functioning.

Luxembourg fully associates itself with the statement made this morning by the Permanent Representative of Portugal on behalf of the European Union. We would like to make a few additional comments in our capacity as a member of the Peacebuilding Commission.

As Luxembourg's Minister for Cooperation and Humanitarian Action said before the General Assembly in February (see A/61/PV.86), the real struggle for peace begins when the fighting is over. In saying that, the Minister drew attention to the complex and multidimensional nature of the peacebuilding process, whose scope goes far beyond just the end of confrontation.

Breaking the cycle of violence by addressing the underlying causes of conflict in the long term and involving the principal national and international actors was the noble ambition that led the heads of State and Government of the entire world, in September 2005, to decide to establish a new body: the Peacebuilding Commission. Our debate today is an opportunity to determine how much ground has been covered since then and to chart the next phase of the development of the ground-breaking Peacebuilding Commission.

As set out in the two reports before us today (A/62/137 and A/62/138), 2006 was essentially devoted to the establishment and initial functioning of the Commission, the Peacebuilding Fund and the Peacebuilding Support Office — the latter headed with skill and dedication by Assistant Secretary-General Carolyn McAskie. That work was essential, however tedious it might have seemed at times, for there was a need to devise original structures and ways of doing things that were in line with both the innovative nature of the mandate entrusted to the Peacebuilding Commission and the demands for efficiency and speed that accompanied the birth of that new body. A genuine peacebuilding architecture has thereby gradually been established. That eloquently attests to the capacity for

innovation and modernization that the United Nations can demonstrate when it is inspired by strong and unanimous political determination on the part of Member States.

Since its inception, the Peacebuilding Commission has developed a relationship of dialogue and openness with all international and governmental actors and representatives of civil society, working together in a synergistic way to make it possible for the Commission to play its role fully and fulfil its new and complex mandate. The Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Support Office have thereby found their place in the United Nations system, with peacebuilding issues being increasingly taken into account by the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and in the operational activities of funds and programmes. That development must be consolidated and strengthened, as, here too, the concept of United Nations system-wide coherence should not be a dead letter.

In that context, I would also like to welcome the absolutely crucial contribution of representatives from civil society and, in particular, non-governmental organizations, whose efforts are essential in defining, implementing and following up peacebuilding strategies.

Lastly, we cannot fail to emphasize the crucial role that can, and must, be played by international financial organizations and regional organizations. I am confident that appropriate arrangements will soon be identified to allow the European Union to find its proper place in the Commission's work as a major international actor deeply involved in the management of conflict and post-conflict situations throughout the world.

The establishment of a real peacebuilding architecture — which, as needed, will have to be further developed and adapted according to operational needs — is only meaningful in terms of the concrete implementation of its mandate vis-à-vis very specific post-crisis situations. That is why there is a need to quickly begin interaction with the first two countries on the Commission's agenda: Burundi and Sierra Leone.

Together, we have made remarkable progress. By formulating integrated peacebuilding strategies with those countries, we now have a much more precise and focused understanding of the numerous complex stakes involved in peacebuilding, as well as of the significant challenges facing actors involved in peacebuilding efforts on a daily basis. By adopting a pragmatic empirical approach that included respect and was based on the principles of national ownership and partnership, in its country-specific configurations the Peacebuilding Commission has made progress in carrying out a dialogue with governmental authorities of the countries concerned and other interlocutors on the adoption of integrated strategies. In what amounts to a contract of trust between the Peacebuilding Commission and the two countries, each partner must now fully assume its responsibilities and meet its commitments for as long as necessary to prevent the recurrence of any sort of violent confrontation.

In order to support and strengthen the process as it moves ahead, we must put in place follow-up and monitoring mechanisms that are both flexible and effective. They should be based on a limited number of quantitative and qualitative indicators making it possible to evaluate the progress made towards peacebuilding and, if necessary, to identify at an early stage potential negative developments that could jeopardize such progress.

The joint use of the means at the disposal of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Peacebuilding Fund and, if necessary, the international community, should make it possible to identify and remedy possible gaps. In that connection, we should more precisely define the respective roles of the Commission and the Fund in order to better sequence their respective efforts.

Although the Peacebuilding Commission's commitment to Burundi and Sierra Leone should continue as long as necessary, it seems to me that the time has come to expand the Commission's work to include other States. I am certain that, with the active support of the Peacebuilding Support Office, the Commission — given its unique integrated character — now has available to it the experience and tools necessary to take up other cases. Of course, we must also provide the Peacebuilding Support Office with adequate resources to carry out its various tasks under favourable conditions.

Although the question of managing conflict and post-conflict situations has been a traditional part of our foreign policy — both in our national capacity and as part of the European Union — Luxembourg has nevertheless been proud to be associated with this

genuine adventure in peacebuilding since the beginning of this year. It is therefore with conviction and enthusiasm that my country has been involved in the various efforts of the Peacebuilding Commission and has made contributions to the Peacebuilding Fund. Luxembourg also announced a contribution of €1 million at the development partners' round table held at Bujumbura at the end of May 2007.

Experience in the course of the first year of the functioning of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund reinforces our belief that the peacebuilding efforts of the United Nations, including the Commission's integrated and multidimensional approach, address a genuine need and provide an appropriate, tailored and innovative response to the numerous challenges posed by peacebuilding.

Much more remains to be done, both in New York and in the field. I wish Ambassador Takasu, the new Chairperson of the Commission, every success. He referred today to some of the issues that the Peacebuilding Commission will have to address in the coming months. I firmly believe that by adopting a pragmatic approach focused on producing concrete results, marshalling positive inputs from various sources and avoiding traditional United Nations bureaucratic tangles and bad habits, much can be achieved. That is Luxembourg's confident hope as we begin the second year of existence of the Commission and the Fund.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.